



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

Mountain
Plains
Region

1244 Speer Boulevard
Denver, CO
80204-3585

Reply to
Attn of: SP-04-28

OCT 05 2004

Subject: Guidance on Determining Categorical Eligibility for Free Lunches and
Breakfasts for Youth Served under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act

To: STATE AGENCY DIRECTORS - Colorado ED, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri ED,
(Special Nutrition Programs) Montana OPI, Nebraska, North Dakota,
South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming

As described in our Reauthorization Implementation Memo SP-04-20, *Categorical Eligibility for Free Lunches and Breakfasts of Runaway, Homeless, and Migrant Youth*, effective July 1, 2004, runaway youth served through grant programs established under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA, Public Law (PL)108-96) are now categorically eligible for free meals in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. This memorandum is a follow up to the July 22, 2004, memorandum and provides background information on the operation of programs under the RHYA and eligibility guidance for schools and school districts.

Background on the Grant Programs established under the RHYA

The Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) is part of the Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF); of the Department of Health and Human Services. FYSB supports local communities in providing services and opportunities to young people, particularly runaway and homeless youth. FYSB does so by awarding funding that enables community agencies to offer services to young people and their families and to test new approaches to helping youth. FYSB promotes and supports youth through its three grant programs: Basic Center Program, Transitional Living Program and the Street Outreach Program. The agencies receiving grants under these three programs are referred to as either FYSB grantees, or RHY service providers.

FYSB works through ten ACYF regional offices located throughout the country; each region has a Regional Youth Specialist (RYS) to serve the States, territories, tribes and other grantees in their geographical area. The RYS are given broad flexibility in guiding the programmatic and financial management of FYSB programs.

The 2003 Reauthorization of the RHY Program directed FYSB to coordinate with school district liaisons under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to assure that RHY are provided information about the educational services available to them and to ensure they receive support services guaranteed under the law.


Documenting Eligibility

In order to better advance FYSB's directive on coordination with McKinney-Vento school district liaison, they are developing an informational memorandum for their grantees that offers suggestions on how to build stronger relationships with the liaisons and offers available resources. We will share their memorandum as soon as it becomes available.

The systems for coordination of information about RHY can vary from State to State and even across districts depending on the relationship between the McKinney-Vento school district liaison and the RHY service provider, and the size of the RHY caseload. In many cases, the McKinney-Vento school district liaison is already working with youth receiving services under the RHY grant programs. In these cases, school districts will be notified of a child's status as a runaway through the existing liaison channels. In some cases, schools may receive information on a youth's participation in a RHY Program directly from the RHY service provider. Documentation to substantiate free meal eligibility must consist of the youth's name, or a list of names, effective date(s), and the signature of the McKinney-Vento school district liaison or the RHY service provider(s). This documentation is acceptable in lieu of a free and reduced price meal application.

It is important that schools/school districts become familiar with their local RHY service providers and their McKinney-Vento school district liaison in order to facilitate the service of free school meals for youth in these programs. Should you have questions regarding the operation of FYSB, please contact your RYS. The website for the regional offices is www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/oro/. For further information on FYSB you may want to view their web site at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/index.html>.

If you have any questions, please contact our office at (303) 844-0354,


DARLENE SANCHEZ
Regional Director
Special Nutrition Programs